

"If I Were Mayor, I Would . . ." Essay Contest Tip Sheet

When you're writing your essay, consider some of the things that mayors can and can not do. For example:

Mayors *can*:

- Work with the city council to decide where businesses should go in the city and where housing should go;
- Apply for grants (money from the state or federal government) to make parks nicer, roads wider and sidewalks safer;
- Work with the city council to decide how the city should spend its money (recycling, street paving, more parks, salaries, etc.);
- Make laws, called "ordinances," to stop people from littering or speeding, and
- Recommend hiring city employees like police officers, fire fighters and building inspectors.

Mayors *can't*:

- Build theme parks;
- Make a law that parents can't make kids eat vegetables;
- Give everyone money, mansions or cars, or
- Fix school lunches (sorry!).

Some places to learn more about what cities do:

- Georgia Municipal Association website: **www.gmanet.com**
- Your city's website (don't know the address? Go to GMA's website and find your city under "About Cities").
- The Georgia Encyclopedia website: **www.georgiaencyclopedia.org**
- Your local newspaper – this is also a good place to read about some of the current events in your city.
- Your mayor or other city officials – city officials are usually very happy to come talk to classes about what they do.